



Tri-model collaboration: Headache or sustainability factor

Melissa Yack Hall, doctoral candidate, University of Utah [melissa.hall@mpa.utah.edu]

Keywords: Reciprocity, stakeholder collaboration, partnership sustainability, human resources

Conference track: Community partnerships and outcomes

Format: Poster presentation

Summary

Human resource issues have been a problem for nonprofits. Salamon (2003) overviewed some of these issues as: struggle to recruit employees when other sectors are more competitive with salary; retention of employees when burn-out is commonplace; and inability to move, as many nonprofits are flat organizations. Another concern is the balance between those who have been in the sector for extended periods of time who display passion and concern for the organization and those who have advanced professional skills but not necessarily passion (Salamon, 2003). Service-learning partnerships could meet all of these concerns with students providing additional capacity for direct and indirect (e.g., project-based, policy research) service. Students could also bring in the expertise they have gained in coursework, as could faculty members.

Quality collaborative efforts are reciprocal in nature and can assist organizations in meeting their goals. Service-learning is not unique to this idea, and its founders and higher education supporters have pressed for reciprocal relationships between universities and community partner organizations (Jacoby, 1996). Reciprocity is evident when all parties are teaching, learning, giving, and receiving (Jones, 2003; Clayton, 2010). Community-university partnerships could afford universities an opportunity to meet goals around community-based teaching and learning (Gelmon et.al, 1998). These partnerships also allow community partners access to resources the university holds as well as access to experts in research and education around the community partner's foci (Gelmon et. al, 1998).

This research expands on an initial literature review and informal exploration to understand whether adding an additional stakeholder and developing a tri-model leads to more sustainable service-learning collaborations. Initial findings illustrate that a tri-model is more likely to sustain itself if the system stays open and continues to revolve with involvement from all stakeholders involved. Though this research is not generalizable, it adds to a growing field of research projects exploring best practices for sustainable service-learning projects.

References

There were no references provided with this proposal.